



HealthTrends

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How to request your medication refills

by Tony Webber, Pharm.D., B.C.P.S.

Use our telephone prescription refill system and avoid waiting in line at the pharmacy for your prescription refills. Prescription medication refill requests called into the automated medication refill request system at least two weeks in advance are mailed directly to your home when they're due.

Here's how to take advantage of the automated medication refill system:



How do I request medication refills?

If you have access to and are able to use a touch-tone phone, simply follow the instructions below:

- Call your local VA's medication refill line phone number. For the Phoenix VA, call **602-222-6598** or **800-359-8262** (toll free within Arizona).
- Enter your Social Security number (SSN) followed by the pound (#) sign.
- Follow the automated instructions:
 1. Select the pharmacy option.
 2. Select the pharmacy refill option.
 3. Enter the prescription number followed by the # sign.
 4. If your prescription number has any letters after it, enter the numbers only.
 5. To request other medication refills, repeat steps two and three until all your medication refills are requested.
 6. End the call.

That's all you have to do. Your prescription will be mailed to your home.

What if I don't have a touch-tone phone or I cannot use one?

You will receive a medication refill slip with your medication. You can always mail in your medication refill slip to request a refill. Remember, though, you need to send in your request at least two weeks in advance!

What if no more refills remain on my current prescription?

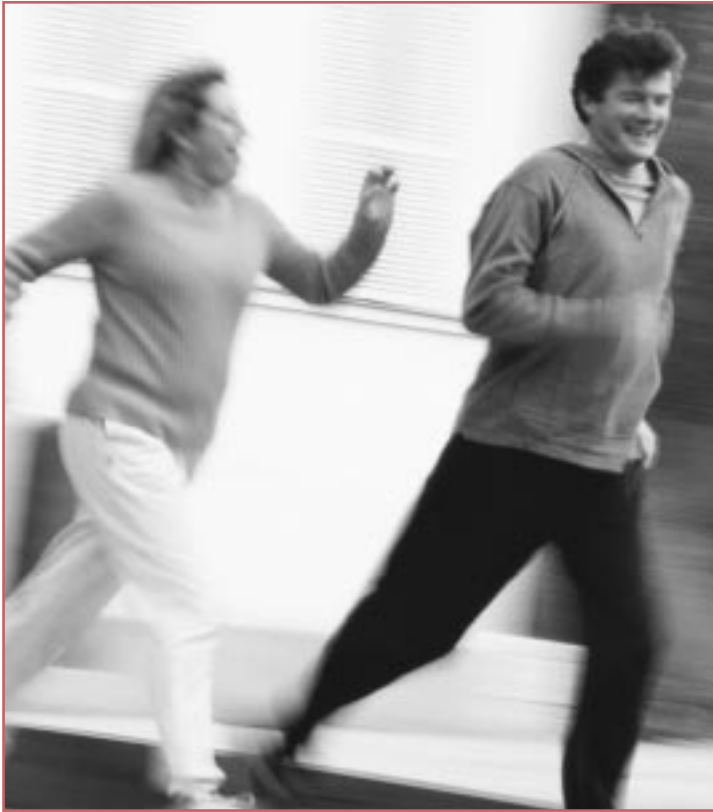
If no more refills are left or if the prescription has expired, you will not be able to request a refill using either of our refill options. You will need to contact your health-care provider.

What if the phone or mail refill options don't work for me?

Using the phone or mail refill options improves the efficiency of our prescription processing services. If you cannot take advantage of either refill option, contact your local VA pharmacy department to make special arrangements.

Our special thanks to Carl's Jr. and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals who are proud supporters of our veterans. Both these companies helped support this year's Veterans Day Parade through donations to the Veterans Medical Leadership Council. We thank both Carl's Jr. and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals for supporting our veterans.





Avoid seasonal weight gain

This time of year, unpleasant weather conditions too often provide the perfect excuse for avoiding exercise. But if you want to lose weight or survive the season without adding any extra pounds, it is crucial to be physically active. The good news is that it is easier than you might think to increase your physical activity, even in imperfect weather.

The easiest way to become more physically active is to make some form of activity a part of your daily routine. Physical activity doesn't have to mean formal exercise such as calisthenics, aerobics or other activities that require special equipment or training.

Many activities you do every day burn calories. For example, the average person (approximately 150 pounds) burns about 100 calories for one hour of housework or 300 calories for one hour of raking leaves or strenuous gardening.

You can use the following tips year round to

help integrate physical activity into your daily routine:

Walk

The average person burns approximately 100 calories per mile whether walking or jogging.

- Use your local mall as an indoor track. One hour of walking through a mall without stopping to browse or shop can burn 300 calories.

- Park your car at the farthest end of the lot to burn more calories as you walk to the entrance.

- Get off the bus a few stops early and walk the extra distance.

- At home or at work, try to walk briskly for 10 minutes out and 10 minutes back twice a day. The average person would lose approximately 31 pounds, or maintain a 31-pound weight loss if this was the only additional activity he or she did.

Climb stairs

Stair climbing is one of the highest calorie-burning activities. Ten minutes of climbing stairs burns two to three times as many calories as 10 minutes of walking. Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever possible.

Start by climbing a few flights and gradually increasing the number. Since the average person burns one calorie every five steps, you could burn hundreds of calories a week before you know it.

Be active at home

- **Put some muscle into your housework.** Scrub, vacuum and wash windows with vigor for an energy expenditure that gets your home sparkling and your heart pumping.
- **Tend your garden.** Try your hand at gardening and landscaping. Plant tomatoes, mow the lawn, pull up shrubs that have seen better days and replace with new ones.
- **Go ahead, watch TV!** Just keep moving while you watch. Walk or march in place. Jump rope or climb stairs during a commercial break.
- **Do a home beautification project.** Scrape away old paint and add a fresh coat. Sand and revarnish tired-looking furniture. Try hanging wallpaper yourself.

Choose to enjoy the holidays

At holiday time, try to remember that enjoyment is a choice. Of those who enjoy the holidays, most have learned to make the best of the holidays as they happen, in spite of their plans. Following is a list of tips that can help you enjoy the holidays.

- Remember, there is no such thing as a perfect holiday.
- Start by being good to yourself. Be as good to yourself as you are to others. Do what you like and enjoy.
- Take some time each day for yourself. Enjoy a bubble bath. Read something just for fun. Take a quiet walk or listen to your favorite music.

- Nourish your spiritual nature during the holidays.
- Work at communicating with your loved ones. No one can be a mind reader.
- Keep up your healthy lifestyle—eat nutritious meals and limit the “goodies,” caffeine and alcohol.

- Take breaks from the holiday festivities. You don’t have to attend every party.
- Practice time management. Prioritize your list of things to do. Then you’ll feel good that the really important things can be accomplished.
- Include others. Let your spouse, children and friends help with holiday preparations.
- Take time out for laughter.
- Escape for a moment to a pleasant memory of holidays past.

Take time to relax

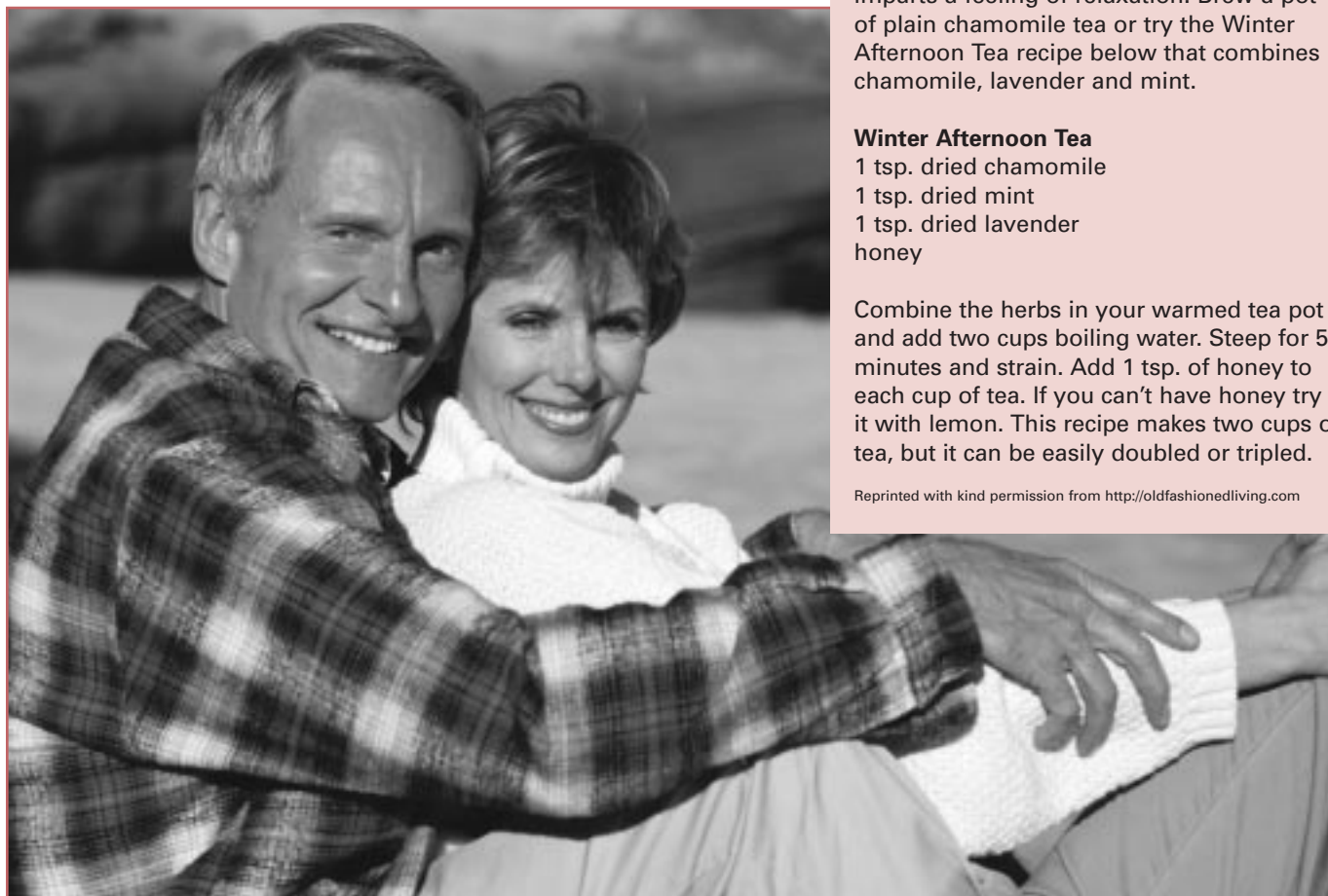
Brew a pot of herbal tea for a relaxing break. Chamomile is a natural herb that imparts a feeling of relaxation. Brew a pot of plain chamomile tea or try the Winter Afternoon Tea recipe below that combines chamomile, lavender and mint.

Winter Afternoon Tea

1 tsp. dried chamomile
1 tsp. dried mint
1 tsp. dried lavender
honey

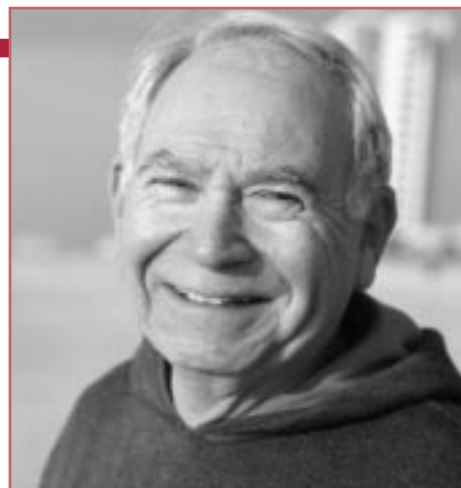
Combine the herbs in your warmed tea pot and add two cups boiling water. Steep for 5 minutes and strain. Add 1 tsp. of honey to each cup of tea. If you can’t have honey try it with lemon. This recipe makes two cups of tea, but it can be easily doubled or tripled.

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You can quit smoking

Five common myths about quitting smoking



MYTH #1 Smoking is just a bad habit.

Fact: Tobacco use is an addiction. According to the U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline, *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*, nicotine is a very addictive drug. For some people, it can be as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

MYTH #2 Quitting is just a matter of willpower.

Fact: Because smoking is an addiction, quitting is often very difficult. A number of treatments are available that can help.



For more information

To get a free copy of other consumer products on quitting smoking, call any of the following toll-free numbers:

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, **800-358-9295**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **800-CDC-1311**
- National Cancer Institute, **800-4-CANCER**
- You can also log onto the Surgeon General's Web site at **www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco**.

MYTH #3 If you can't quit the first time you try, you will never be able to quit.

Fact: Quitting is hard. Usually, people make two or three tries, or more, before being able to quit for good.

MYTH #4 The best way to quit is "cold turkey."

Fact: The most effective way to quit smoking is by using a combination of counseling and nicotine replacement therapy (such as the nicotine patch, inhaler, gum or nasal spray) or non-nicotine medicines (such as bupropion SR). Your healthcare provider or smoking cessation clinic is the best place to go for help with quitting.

MYTH #5 Quitting is expensive.

Fact: Treatments cost from \$3 to \$10 a day. A pack-a-day smoker spends almost \$1,000 a year. VA Medical Centers offer smoking cessation resources as well as counseling.

Visit our Web site to get information on health and medication questions at
http://www.va.gov/visn18/HI/Health_Informatics.htm

For patient concerns or issues, contact our patient representatives at (602) 277-5551, ext. 7394.

(602) 222-6508

Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center
Ambulatory Care

To change your address, contact:

your healthcare provider.
medical advice, which should be obtained from
not intended as a substitute for professional
services provided by VISA 18. *Health Trends* is
health and wellness information and news about
Health Trends is designed to provide general

Smoking Cessation Program.
If you are a veteran who is currently smoking
and would like to learn ways to stop this habit,
help is available through the Carl T. Hayden
VA/MC. Please contact your primary care
provider and request a consultation to the

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